

Holistic Development of Women through Integration of Indian Knowledge System in Contemporary Curriculum

Savitri Devi Meena¹, Vidyasagar Maurya²

¹Assistant Professor, Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India
savitri@spm.du.ac.in

²Assistant Professor, Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India
vidyasagar@spm.du.ac.in

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Abstract— The comprehensive growth of women is one of the crucial objectives of modern education, especially in the environment of the high pace of globalization and cultural change. The paper addresses how Indian Knowledge System (IKS) contributes to the holistic development of women by incorporating it in the contemporary curriculum. The research paper is composed in the key of a qualitative and conceptual study, which uses secondary sources, based on classical text of India, the native tradition of knowledge and the current publications on education, including the National Education Policy 2020. Its rationale is that IKS is an approach to prolong the education beyond academic achievements and success and promotes intellectual, emotional, moral, cultural, and social development. Indigenous pedagogy through IKS such as Guru-Shishya tradition, experiential and enquiry learning, Ayurveda, mindfulness learning, and Dharma-based ethics assist women in forming their identity, becoming self-sufficient, and accountable in society. The cultures of women and justification of their experiences during formal education is another aspect that is proved by the subjugation of the local arts, medical practices, and the folk wisdom. The results indicate that the incorporation of IKS in the current curriculum will enhance inclusive, culturally-responsive, and value-based education. This is the way which will enable women to tackle the modern problems without losing touch with the moral and cultural enlightenment hence providing viable meaning to the performance of the time-tested ideal of Indian education "Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye".

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian education system has seen profound changes over time (Amani, 2024). From the early gurukul and home-based education to the institutional arrangements of the colonial period and now to the modern, global learning framework (Sharma and Rai, 2024). The colonial influence and westernization affected the nature of Indian education to such an extent that the traditional Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS) that were once ingrained in every sphere of life were gradually marginalized (Khare and Kumar, 2025). But the National Education Policy (NEP-2020) has tried to bring Indian knowledge traditions back to the centre of education by giving a new direction and vision in the field of education (NEP, 2020). The Indian knowledge system is

not just a repository of academic knowledge, but it is a holistic vision balancing the intellectual, physical, emotional, moral and spiritual dimensions of life (Kumar, 2025). The incorporation of these principles is especially important in the field of women's education, as women have been the carriers of Indian culture, values, and tradition for centuries (Nurhayati et al, n.d).

The term "Indian Knowledge System (IKS)" used in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is different from the indigenous knowledge system. The policy document makes it clear that the concept of "Knowledge of India" focuses primarily on the intellectual heritage of ancient India and its implications on modern India (Amani, 2024). However, the indigenous knowledge traditions developed during the

Muslim rule, a crucial period in the history of India, have not been given the required importance. Though the policy emphasizes on the use of tribal and traditional learning methods, overall, it appears to be more inclined towards reconfiguring the ancient Indian knowledge system in line with the modern education system. The inclusion of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in the modern education curriculum is not only limited to the intellectual development of women, but it also plays an important role in their all-round personality formation (Lestari, 2021). This type of education develops sensitivity, self-reliance and leadership ability in women. At the same time, it strikes a balance between knowledge, compassion and creativity, enabling women to stay connected to their cultural heritage and values even in the face of pressures of globalization and modernization

The main aim of this study is to try to understand how traditional Indian knowledge traditions can give new energy and direction to the modern Indian education system. The paper analyses the nature and relevance of these knowledge traditions and attempts to explain how they can be integrated into the modern educational structure. The aim is to envision an education system that balances modern requirements while upholding Indianness and human values. Thus, the objective of “Holistic Development of Women through Integration of Indian Knowledge System in Modern Curriculum” is to make education value-based, culturally empowered and holistic development-oriented, not just employment-oriented. This study is an attempt in this direction to understand how the principles and traditions of the Indian knowledge system can make modern women's education more meaningful, valuable and assimilable.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The role of women in Indian society has always been the cornerstone of the transmission of culture, tradition and knowledge. Srivastava (2025) in his study makes it clear that the role of women is extremely important in the preservation, dissemination and revitalization of Indian Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). He pointed out that through folk songs, folk dances, folk tales, traditional handicrafts, agro-art and religious rituals, women not only maintain cultural identity but also empower social unity, collectively and moral values. According to Kumar & Soundarapandian (2024), the integration of Indian educational philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems provides a culturally sensitive and sustainable approach to education. He is of the opinion that this type of education is not limited to intellectual development, but is a continuous process of harmonizing life and existence. This approach resembles the ideology of great educationists like Tagore and Gandhi, according to whom education should be seen as a moral and spiritual journey. Therefore, the inclusion of

Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in the modern curriculum develops qualities like sensitivity, ethics and self-empowerment in women. Taking this idea further, Nurhayati et al. (2023) in their study on the Kasepuhan Sinar Resmi community have made it clear that women in tribal traditions act as a bridge between knowledge, culture and nature. Philosophical concepts such as "Ibu Bumi, Bapa Langit" reflect the fact that women have traditionally played the role of cultural educators and community leaders. Incorporating these traditional roles of women in education effectively promotes their social and moral development. According to Khare and Kumar (2025), the Indian knowledge system is a powerful medium to connect modern education with global issues such as sustainability, health and ethical lifestyle.

Elements like yoga and ayurveda provide peace of mind, self-discipline and a balanced outlook by not limiting education to knowledge alone. This kind of educational vision develops mental equilibrium, self-confidence and preventive health awareness in women, which is essential for their all-round development. Amani (2024) has mentioned in the context of National Education Policy (NEP-2020) that the restoration of Indian knowledge system in education under the policy establishes a meaningful harmony between tradition and modernity. Components such as yoga, ayurveda, art and Vedanta philosophy make education value-based rather than just knowledge-based. As a result, the integrated development of cultural identity, morality and social consciousness is possible in women. According to Qasim (2024) the Indian knowledge system inculcates values like compassion, empathy and social responsibility in education. Methods such as yoga and meditation play an important role in awakening emotional balance and self-awareness in women

A historical analysis by Fatima and Tyagi (2025) makes it clear that the role of women in Indian civilization has always been active, dynamic and creative. They have demonstrated that women have not only strengthened the moral fabric of the family and society, but have also contributed significantly to upholding values such as environmental consciousness and social justice. When these historical and cultural roles are re-established through education, women develop cultural confidence and leadership potential.

On the same note, Suminar (2017) has indicated that adopting indigenous knowledge as a form of lifelong learning can be an effective and practical model of women's empowerment. With the example of the Samin community of Indonesia, she showed that the integration of local values, which include truth, simplicity, unity and justice, and education, enabled women to be self-reliant, productive and socially active. The strategy corresponds to the principle of learning by doing of the Indian system of knowledge. Syahban et al. (2025) defined traditional knowledge as

ecological intelligence. He argued that combining indigenous knowledge in education with digital tools and project-based learning makes education more sustainable, creative and community-oriented. According to her, this approach makes women eco-sensitive and develops creativity and leadership potential in them.

Researchers have made it clear that by integrating the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into modern education, education does not remain just a medium of intellectual development, but it becomes deeply connected with life, morality and culture. The conclusion of all these studies is that the inclusion of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in modern education not only restores traditional knowledge but also imparts moral, emotional and spiritual depth to education. Such an education system provides a strong foundation for the all-round development of women, through which the balanced development of their intellectual, moral, emotional and cultural dimensions is possible. As a result, women are not only educated but also empowered, self-reliant and culturally aware citizens. This teaching thus gives real expression to that eternal principle of Indian educational philosophy “sa vidya or vimuktaye” (that learning which gives liberation). With this in mind, the presented study has been analyzed for the following purpose.

III. AIM AND OBJECTIVE

To analyze the role of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in promoting the holistic development of women through the integration of well beings, traditional values, cultural wisdom, and ethical learning within the modern curriculum.

IV. METHODS

In the present study, qualitative research method has been used, which is mainly based on secondary data.

V. DATA COLLECTION

Data and materials for the study were collected from various published books, research journals, government and non-government reports, conference proceedings and online academic databases. These sources included theoretical and empirical studies, particularly related to the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), women's education, and holistic development. The objective of this study was to understand how the integration of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in the modern education system promotes the intellectual, moral, emotional and spiritual development of women.

VI. DISCUSSION

The discussion on the results of this study has been systematically presented on the basis of research question.

The findings under above question have been analysed in the context of relevant literature, theories and principles of Indian Knowledge System (IKS).

RQ-1: How does the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) contribute to the holistic development of women in modern education?

The Vedas, the oldest extant scriptures of Hinduism, are the foundations of the Indian Knowledge System (Kumar, 2025). This knowledge system, rooted in Indian civilization, represents a holistic view of life in which knowledge, culture, ethics and spirituality intertwine to create a balanced philosophy of life. The indigenous wisdom of women symbolizes the deep tradition of Indian philosophy of life in which the balance between nature and man is given the highest place. This knowledge has been transmitted from generation to generation through folk art, agriculture, medicinal traditions and rituals (Fatima & Tyagi, 2025). Women have been the cornerstone of this cultural continuity in regional societies. For example, women in the Kasepuhan Sinar Resmi community teach through the concept of “Ibu Bumi, Bapa Langit, Guru Mangsa” that the essence of life lies in harmony with nature, balance and gratitude (Nurhayati et al., 2023). Based on the rice culture, every action in their lives farming, celebration or daily work - reflects a sense of environmental ethics and cultural responsibility. This approach shows that indigenous knowledge of women is not just a traditional practice, but a powerful tool for sustainable development, moral education and community well-being (Maheshkumar & Soundarapandian, 2024). This concept will be further elucidated through an analysis of its various dimensions.

WELL-BEING DIMENSION

Women from rural and tribal areas treat common ailments like cuts, boils, pimples, fever, cold, cough, digestive problems and skin diseases through their rich indigenous medicinal knowledge. They prepare homemade recipes using leaves, bark, roots and fruits of medicinal plants like neem, turmeric, tulsi, ghatkumari, bel, kalmegh, ajwain, ginger, henna, sandalwood. Neem and turmeric paste in bite wound or infection, decoction of tulsi-ginger-pepper in fever and mixture of ginger-honey or tulsi-clove-cinnamon in cold-cough are considered effective. In digestive problems like indigestion, constipation and diarrhoea pulp of vine, triphala or ajwain-dhania are consumed, while in skin diseases neem, ghatkumari, turmeric and henna made ointments are beneficial (Singh and Singh, 2007). Women apply a mixture of medicinal extracts in mustard, sesame or castor oil on wounds and boils and pimples, and a face pack made of sandalwood, rose water and lemon juice keeps the skin glowing and clean (Singh and Singh, 2007). All these traditional treatment methods are affordable, accessible, safe and without side effects, which have been passed down from generation to generation through oral tradition. This folk-medicinal tradition not only reveals the practical

intelligence and experience-based health knowledge of women, but also clearly shows the important role being played in the health-preservation and management of their community.

This tradition is deeply connected with the Indian Knowledge System (IKS), as it contains the same principle of maintaining a balance between nature, body and society that has been the basis of Ayurveda, folk medicine and environment-based life philosophy. These indigenous remedies adopted by women, judicious use of local resources and this knowledge transmitted orally from generation to generation, present vivid examples of the sustainable way of life and holistic health approach of the Indian knowledge system.

VII. CULTURAL DIMENSION

Culture refers to the collective values, beliefs, traditions and behavioural habits that people of a society learn over time and share with each other. All these elements together form the way of life and social identity of a society (Ennaji, 2005) because culture is an acquired process, it has a profound impact on how one perceives oneself, one's surroundings and one's position in the world. Ultimately, this process plays an important role in the formation of individual and collective identity. (Ennaji 2005). Under this cultural framework, clothing is not only a medium of expression of individual identity, but also a sign of social status and roles. (Kaur & Gale, 2002). Studies show that handmade textiles are a medium of visual expression of roles such as gender, social class and social status. (Eriksen, 2005; Forney and Rabolt, 1986). Traditional handicraft textiles manufactured in North-East India (NERI) reflect the identity of tribal life and culture. These fabrics are woven with symbols related to folk traditions, religious-cultural practices, mythological beliefs, festivals and natural environment of the region, which reflect the cultural understanding and way of life of the communities there (Chakravorty et al., 2013). In Tripura, all religious rituals begin with the worship of Riha, a handmade garment. In Assam, Ghomsa a handmade cotton shawl is used to respectfully welcome guests (Devi 2013). Similarly, Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are central to the preservation of the art of textile making in various tribal communities of India. For example, In Lambani embroidery, traditional techniques, symbols and colour combinations are passed down from generation to generation. This reflects the fact that IKS not only preserves and beautifies the art forms but also helps strengthen the cultural identity and sustain the continued existence of the community. This tradition not only preserves the cultural connotations associated with traditional motifs, colours and stitching techniques but also ensures that this rich cultural heritage does not fade away with time. Studies related to the Sandur and Ballari regions make it clear that the transmission of knowledge in oral and experiential forms

from generation to generation has been the mainstay of this tradition's continuity. In many indigenous communities, women have taken on the responsibility of preserving traditional crafts, and the Lambani community is no exception. Lambani embroidery is a predominantly women-centric art form, in which skills, knowledge and techniques have been passed down from generation to generation from mothers to daughters (Gowda & Nataraj, 2017). The women of this community have been the principal medium of this intricate needlework. They create colourful and symbolic motifs, in which glimpses of their faith, traditions and community life are clearly visible. The designs and embellishments used in these embroideries are deeply rooted in the cultural and spiritual beliefs of the community, where each stitch and each pattern have its own specific meaning and symbolic significance. By passing on these techniques and motifs from generation to generation, women ensure the continuity of this rich cultural heritage (Chawla et al., 2017).

Indigenous knowledge of women is a living embodiment of India's cultural heritage, which is rooted in tradition, philosophy of life and a sense of community unity. Various studies on Karbi tribe of Assam, Lambani women of Karnataka and tribal women of Melghat region of Maharashtra show that women are not only carriers of traditional medicinal knowledge, handicrafts, agriculture, water conservation and food processing techniques but also reinforce their cultural identity and social solidarity through these practices. Activities such as embroidery, weaving, Jhum agriculture, wild food collection and use of medicinal plants are not just means of livelihood for women, but are cultural expressions that reflect the Indian vision of balance between nature, body and society. Through folklore, traditional songs and oral traditions, women pass on this knowledge to the next generation, thereby maintaining the continuity of "living culture" in the community.

Although commercialization and modernization have challenged this traditional knowledge, women are still adapting it to the modern perspective while maintaining its authenticity. Thus, indigenous knowledge of women is not only the cultural heritage, but also the basis of sustainability, community development and moral education, which keeps the soul of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) alive.

Traditional Values and Ethical Learning Dimension

Values reflect an individual's personal attitudes, conscience, decision-making abilities, choices, behaviours and interpersonal relationships (Garg and Choudhry, 2024). These values determine how a person behaves in society, how he perceives social situations and what kind of relationships he establishes with others. In fact, values are the guiding principles of human behaviour, which give direction to his thoughts and actions. Values can generally be divided into two categories: Relative values, which change according to society, culture and time, and absolute

or universal values, which are equally valid in all societies and situations.

Values in Ethical Learning

Relative values are based on an individual's likes and dislikes, social beliefs, traditions and cultural norms. These values are society-specific and culture-specific and evolve over time. During learning, students imbibe these values from their socio-cultural environment.

Through education that one learns how to behave in society and how to relate to others. In the process of learning, basically two types of values are developed - First relative value and second absolute or universal value. Relative values are based on an individual's likes and dislikes, social beliefs, traditions and cultural norms. These values are society-specific and culture-specific and evolve over time. During learning, students imbibe these values from their socio-cultural environment. For example, in the Indian education tradition, the spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam develops collectively, co-existence and social responsibility in students, while in other cultural contexts, values such as liberalism, tolerance, individualism and utilitarianism form part of learning. Thus, relative values help in maintaining order, balance and cultural continuity in the society through learning. It is in this context of comprehensive value-based learning that the Indian knowledge tradition presents concrete thematic examples through which these values are imbibed in practice. In the Indian traditional knowledge, mathematics has not been a subject confined to numbers and calculations, but it has been the effective medium for the development of values such as truth, discipline, precision and reasoned responsibility, which are deeply embedded in the ethical framework of Dharma. The emphasis on evidence-based thinking, rationality and correctness in ancient Indian mathematics develops intellectual honesty, clarity of judgment and a sense of responsibility in students. Similarly, the study of Ayurveda reinforces the lifestyle-based values enshrined in the Indian way of life, where health, balance, self-restraint, harmony with nature and respect for life are central. Ayurveda's principle of "Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam" is not limited to the physical well-being of an individual but also entails a sense of social and environmental responsibility. Through such inclusion, learning becomes a means of connecting individual conduct with collective interests, thereby reinforcing both moral consciousness and cultural continuity.

The role of human values is considered central in the development of moral consciousness. Human values are universal, as they are deeply linked to fundamental human identities such as human dignity and mutual respect. When these values are systematically incorporated into the learning process, education becomes a means of developing moral conscience and social responsibility, rather than being limited to intellectual achievement. As a result, students

begin to understand that the impact of their thoughts, decisions, and conduct is not only at the individual level, but also in the larger social interest. In the Indian perspective, value-based learning is deeply embedded in social and cultural behaviours, due to which moral education takes on an experiential, rather than merely theoretical, character. Festivals like Buddha Purnima, Mahavir Jayanti, Ram Navami and Guru Parva bring alive the moral ideals of non-violence, compassion, self-restraint and gratitude. The collective participation of people from different religious and social backgrounds on these occasions reinforces values such as tolerance, inclusiveness and mutual respect. Thus, learners get an opportunity to experience moral principles in real social contexts, making value education more effective and meaningful.

Similarly, classical dances like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali and Kuchipudi and folk dances like Bhangra, Garba, Ghoomar and Bihu vividly express values like discipline, collective harmony, respect for tradition and social responsibility. In these artistic activities, observance of rules, coordination with the group and the process of expression develop self-control and moral discipline in the students. As a result, moral values are not stated only in theory, but are lived in practice. Inclusion of human values in education thus transforms learning from a mere knowledge-centric activity to a human-centric, socially responsive and ethically enriching process. This approach helps in building tolerant, sensitive and responsible individuals and ensures all-round development of learners, enabling them to engage constructively with contemporary challenges as well as eternal moral values.

RQ-2: In what ways do IKS informed pedagogical practices support women's identity formation, self-reliance, and social responsibility in contemporary education?

The inclusion of Indian Knowledge System (IKS) in contemporary educational frameworks for women has the potential to profoundly transform the nature of learning as it lays special emphasis on all-round development, personal empowerment and moral consciousness. In contrast to narrow skill-based pedagogies, the IKS-based educational approach acknowledges women as intellectually, emotionally, morally and socially active individuals whose education requires the incorporation of identity-building, self-reliance and social responsibility. Integrating traditional indigenous teaching methods with modern educational needs, the Indian knowledge system presents culturally relevant frameworks that reinforce women's academic progress as well as the development of emotional intelligence, leadership potential and ethical agency. There are several educational frameworks developed from the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) that prove to be particularly relevant in the contemporary educational

environment in terms of making women's education more effective and meaningful:

Guru-Shishya Pedagogical Model

The traditional guru-shishya tradition underlines the importance of a close, trust-based relationship between teacher and learner as well as the value of experiential learning. In the context of women's education, this framework can be adopted in the form of mentorship, which helps in strengthening self-confidence, enhancing self-efficacy and providing support as per individual needs. Especially for those students who are first generation learners in their family. This type of relational pedagogy encourages women's sense of self-worth, empowers their expression, and promotes their continued academic engagement through a safe and nurturing educational environment.

Experiential Learning for Women's Empowerment

Experiential learning can be defined as the process of acquiring knowledge through direct participation, reflective thinking and practical application. This learning method enables female learners to connect their educational experiences with their real life experiences. Women develop critical thinking, problem-solving abilities and practical skills through participation in community projects, health promotion programmes and skill-development activities. As a result, their employability increases and their ability towards self-reliance also strengthens.

Sankhya Yoga Based Integrative Learning

The Sankhya Yoga approach presents a synthesis of the intellectual, emotional and spiritual aspects of the learning process. When this vision is adopted in the context of women's education, it helps in developing mental fortitude, emotional balance and self-awareness. These qualities are essential to effectively cope with academic pressures, social expectations and challenges associated with personal development. This kind of holistic approach strengthens women's cognitive development as well as their mental health.

Self-Reflection and Mindfulness Practices

Methods of mindfulness, meditation and introspection, rooted in Indian philosophical traditions, play an important role in women's education. These exercises reinforce the ability for emotional control, stress management and self-evaluation. It develops emotional intelligence in female learners, enabling them to face various challenges constructively and build self-confidence and inner stability. Babbar et al. 2021. Valim et al., 2019).

Dharma-Centred Ethical Education

The principle of dharma is focused on the idea of moral responsibility, duty, and social peace. When Dharma is incorporated in education of women, it espouses value-based learning which encourages ethical decision making,

integrity and social awareness. Such moral base (Stojanovska, 2024) allows women to find a balance between personal ambitions and social responsibility and develop a morally-conscious leadership in the process.

Project based learning with a hint of indigenous inquiry

Basing on the ancient Indian traditions of inquiry, project-based learning enables female students to meet the problems of the real world using interdisciplinary and collaborative approach. The model enhances the strength of agency, innovation, and leadership abilities so that (Sharma, 2020) women can practice knowledge in a meaningful domain.

Interdisciplinary Learning Traditions

Based on the contemporary centres of learning like Nalanda and Takshashila, interdisciplinary educational method of women education promotes interrelation in the fields of science and humanities, and in ethics and health. This expanse of intellectual coverage is helpful in promoting the holistic growth of women in the world that is fast changing and therefore requires adaptive thinking.

Critical voice Inquiry-Based Learning

Old Indian pedagogy was sensitive to discussion, interrogation and argument. Inquiry-based learning enables women to pose questions, ask assumptions and form critical views, and cultivate intellectual autonomy and trust to academic and social arenas

VIII. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The current research shows that the introduction of the Indian Knowledge System (IKS) into the contemporary curriculum is a significant area to give the Indian girls comprehensive development. The discussion shows that IKS goes further to educate not only in terms of academic success but also through moral, emotional, cultural, and social aspects. IKS transforms the nature of education through its value-based and experiential method in such a way that it is defined as a process that is life-centred and cultural as opposed to the skill-based approach to education. The results show that IKS enhances the well-being of women using indigenous health conditions, Ayurveda, yoga and mindfulness, which lead to self-control, mental strength and complete health. At the same time, the introduction of indigenous arts, crafts, rituals, and knowledge of communities confirms that women have a cultural identity and are known to be bearers of traditional wisdom. This kind of integration helps in the bridge between informal indigenous learning and formal education. In addition, IKS supports ethical learning by the notion of Dharma, entrenching responsibility, truthfulness, equilibrium, and harmony in the social context in educational activities. Informed pedagogical models based on IKS such as the Guru Shishya, experiential and inquiry-based learning will lead to identity growth, self-dependence, social responsibility of women and will enable them to grow confident and morally responsible learners. In conclusion,

IKS inclusion in contemporary school is a culturally sensitive and viable manner of women growing in totality. It would make the contemporary educational purposes to be equal to the civilizational ideals of India in a way which women education would be empowering, inclusive and transformative and that it will give a viable meaning to the long-standing tradition of Indian education 'Sa Vidya Ya Vimuktaye'.

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